

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms, comprising

adding a soil-improving material to contaminated soil, the soil-improving material being having water-absorbing, and having both properties and being capable of maintaining a non-swelling property and non-viscosity properties after absorbing water absorption to in contaminated soil containing clay or silt, and then

mixing the soil by agitation, so as to cause the soil-improving material to absorb pore water contained in the clay or silt,

while adding microbes to the contaminated soil that degrade the degrading contaminants contained within the contaminated soil ~~to the contaminated soil~~, or utilizing degradation microbes ~~inhabiting the~~ already present in the contaminated soil, thereby microbially degrading the contaminants.

2. (Original) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to claim 1, wherein the degradation microbes are added to the contaminated soil while not being contained by the soil-improving material.

3. (Original) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to claim 1, wherein aeration is performed for the contaminated soil when the contaminant is microbially degraded.

4. (Original) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the soil-improving material is an inorganic soil-improving material.

5. (Original) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to claim 4, wherein the inorganic soil-improving material is perlite.

6. (Currently amended) A method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms, comprising the steps of:

adding a soil-improving material, the soil-improving material being having water-absorbing, and having both ~~properties and being capable of maintaining a non-swelling property~~ and non-viscosity properties after absorbing water ~~absorption to~~ in contaminated soil containing clay or silt; ~~followed by~~

mixing the soil by agitation; and

degrading contaminants contained in the contaminated soil by adding microbes to the contaminated soil that degrade the contaminants ~~to~~ within the contaminated soil and/or utilizing degradation microbes ~~inhabiting~~ already present in the contaminated soil.

7. (Original) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to claim 6, wherein the degradation microbes and the soil-improving material are separately added to the contaminated soil.

8. (Currently amended) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to claim 6, wherein aeration is performed for the contaminated soil ~~in~~ during the step of degrading ~~the~~ contaminants.

9. (Original) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein the soil-improving material mainly comprises an inorganic soil-improving material.

10. (Original) The method of purifying contaminated soil by microorganisms according to claim 9, wherein the inorganic soil-improving material is perlite.